

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03  
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SAM-01  
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R 150312Z DEC 76  
FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5499  
INFO AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

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E.O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS: PINT, MY  
SUBJECT: "ASIAWEEK" ARTICLE ON UMNO POWER STRUGGLE

1. EMBASSY TODAY (DEC 14) AIR POUCHED TO DEPT COPY OF ARTICLE IN DEC 17 EDITION OF HONG KONG-BASED "ASIAWEEK" MAGAZINE ENTITLED "PLAYING FOR HIGH STAKES," WHICH DESCRIBES THE CURRENT FERMENT IN THE DOMINANT UMNO PARTY. THE ARTICLE, WHICH WE UNDERSTAND WAS WRITTEN BY SRI K. NAYAGAM, MALAYSIAN CORRESPONDENT FOR "ASIAWEEK" (IN LIEU OF M.G.G. PILLAI, NOW AT HARVARD AS NIEMAN FELLOW) AND ALSO NEWS EDITOR FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE DAILY "THE STAR," CAUSED EDITION TO BE HELD UP FOR REVIEW BY POLICE SPECIAL BRANCH FOR THREE DAYS BEFORE IT WAS FINALLY RELEASED TO PUBLIC SALE YESTERDAY.

2. NAYAGAM IN HIS ARTICLE CITES AN UNIDENTIFIED "HIGH RANKING PARTY OFFICIAL AND CABINET MEMBER" AS BREAKING DOWN THE COMPETING FACTIONS IN OR CLOSE TO UMNO INTO FOUR GROUPINGS: GROUP 1 COMPRISE DATUK HUSSEIN ONN, DR. MAHATHIR MOHAMED AND PRESUMABLY PRIMARY INDUSTRIES MINISTER MUSA HITAM; GROUP 2 COMPRISES THOSE KNOWN AS THE UMNO "OLD GUARD," INCLUDING SUCH PARTY STALWARTS AS EX-PM TUNKU ABDUL RAHMAN, UMNO YOUTH LEADER JAAFAR ALBAR, EX-AMBASSADOR TO THE U.S. KHIR JOHARI, EX-UMNO YOUT HLEADER AND FORMER SELANGOR STATE CHIEF MINISTER DATUK HARUN IDRIS, AS WELL AS FORMER SABAH CHIEF MINISTER TUN MUSTAPHA; GROUP 3 INCLUDES FINANCE MINISTER TENGKU RAZALEIGH AND NATIONAL FRONT SECRETARY GENERAL GHAFAR BABA, AS WELL AS SARAWAK CHIEF MINISTER

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RAHMAN YAKUB AND SABAH CHIEF MINISTER HARRIS SALLEH; AND

FINALLY, GROUP 4, WHICH INCLUDES TWO FORMER DEPUTY MINISTERS NOW DETAINED UNDER THE INTERNAL SECURITY ACT, DATUK ABDULLAH AHMAD AND ABDULLAH MAJID, AS WELL AS UMNO EXECUTIVE SECRETARY KHALIL AKASAH AND THE PM'S PRESS SECRETARY WAHAB MAJID, BOTH OF WHOM ARE CURRENTLY ALLEGED BY THE UMNO RIGHT WING (GROUP 2) TO BE IMPLICATED WITH SAMAD ISMAIL IN COMMUNIST ACTIVITIES. ARTICLE DESCRIBES IN SOME DETAIL INTERACTION BETWEEN THESE FOUR GROUPS.

3. COMMENT: THE ARTICLE DRAWS HEAVILY ON A BRIEFING WE HAVE BEEN TOLD DATUK MUSA HITAM GAVE TO THE FACULTY OF ECONOMICS AND ADMINISTRATION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MALAYA, KUALA LUMPUR, ON NOVEMBER 23, WHICH WE ARE COMMENTING ON BY AIRGRAM.  
UNDERHILL

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NNN

## Message Attributes

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**TAGS:** PINT, MY, ASIaweek  
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